

Annalong Congregation Of The Presbyterian Church In Ireland

Trustees' Annual Report

Year ended 31 December 2023

The trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name Annalong Congregation Of The Presbyterian Church In Ireland
Charity registration number NI104990
Principal office 30 Ballyveaghmore Road
Ballymartin
Co Down
BT34 4UL

The trustees

Rev David McCullagh
Keith Hanna
Brian G McKibbin
James A Martin
Alan E Hill
Trevor McConnell
William McConnell
Robert J Burden
Harding R Acheson
James A Hanna
Jason Hill
Charles Martin
Samuel McConnell

Independent examiner

Purdy Quinn
Northern Bank House
42 Greencastle Street
KILKEEL
Co Down
BT34 4BH

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Structure, governance and management

The Kirk Session

The charity trustees of the congregation are the members of its Kirk Session. Under the congregation's governing document, The Code, the book of the constitution and government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Kirk Session seeks to watch over and promote the spiritual interest of the congregation and of persons not connected with any congregation who are within its bounds. It ensures pastoral care is in place in the congregation and seeks to further the contribution of the Church to Christian witness and service in the local community. The Kirk Sessions has delegated to its Congregational Committee the temporal affairs of the congregation including administering all funds and property belonging to the congregation. Members of the Kirk Session are ex-officio members of the Congregational Committee.

The Kirk Session consists of the ordained minister and the ruling elders of the congregations. All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes at meetings, except that the Moderator, the ministers in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held at least five times in each year or more frequent if appropriate.

To be chosen for the office of the eldership in the congregation a person must be a voting member and a regular attendant on its ordinances. The selection of those proposed to be called to the office can be either by the congregation or by the Kirk Session. Members are elected if they obtain two-thirds of the votes cast.

Presbytery

Under the Presbyterian Church in Ireland form of governance the corporate oversight of a congregation is the responsibility of a Presbytery which superintends generally the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Annalong Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Newry Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The membership of the Presbytery consists mainly of the active ministers of congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly, ministers who have retired from active duty and an elder appointed by the Kirk Session of each congregation.

The General Assembly

The General Assembly is the supreme court of the Church, representing in one body the whole Church and acting as its supreme legislative, administration and judicial authority, in dealing with all matters brought before it. The General Assembly is normally constituted during the first week in June for worship and to conduct its business. At the end of business it is dissolved. The membership of the General Assembly consists mainly of the active ministers of each congregation, retired ministers and a representative elder appointed by the Kirk Session of each congregation.

Objectives and activities

Annalong Presbyterian Church is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as a Reformed Church within the wider body of Christ is grounded in the Scriptures, and exists to love and honour God through faith in His Son and by the power of His Spirit, and to enable her members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

The congregation's mission purposes by the grace of God, to help people of all ages become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Our vision is, by the grace of God, to be an inclusive, welcoming community of Christ's people of all ages, which:

- is increasingly characterised by love for God, and love and concern for others;
- is committed to the historic Christian gospel as revealed in the Bible;
- is relevant to people of this time and place.

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Objectives and activities *(continued)*

The congregation aims to live out its Mission and Vision as a family of God's people by being:

- A Covenant Community: where our relationships are rooted in the promises of God by living faithfully toward him and toward one another
- An Intergenerational Community: where adults intentionally take the lead to engage with, encourage and nurture younger members to maturity in Christ.
- An Outward looking Community: where we want the blessings of God that belong to us in the gospel to become blessings for others beyond the bounds of our community.
- As a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we believe that the Bible is the supreme authority over all we do, and that the Westminster Confession of Faith, along with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms set out what we understand the Bible teaches on key matters of Christian faith and practice.

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lords Supper is observed on several occasions during the year and all those who have been baptised and who have made a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are admitted to the Lord's Supper. The congregation holds regular bible study meetings and has a wide range of organisations including

- Sunday Schools
- Tots & Toys
- Bowling Club
- Presbyterian Woman
- Men's Fellowship
- Girls Brigade
- Boys Brigade
- Tuesday fellowship
- Youth Fellowship
- Women's Bible Study
- Warm Welcome

Achievements and performance

Worship and prayer

The congregation meets for worship each Sunday at 11:30am (11:00am during July and August) and 7:00pm.

During the week the Bible Study provides an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer.

As well as our regular services during the year we acknowledged God's gift of new life at 3 Sacraments of Baptism, we conducted several marriage services and gave thanks for faithful services and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

At 31st December 2023 there were 223 communicant members and 316 families connected with the congregations.

The average weekly attendance at morning worship is 300 and 90 at evening worship.

Pastoral care

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age were visited on a regular basis by the minister and the elders.

Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregation seeks to be a witness to the community by providing clubs and organisations for

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young and old to attend and by providing spiritual and emotional support to everyone who seeks help.

At Easter we held a church picnic on the Monday afternoon, due to inclement weather this was held in the main hall with various activities laid on to entertain and inform all members of the family, young and old. This was enjoyed by all who attended.

Another of our yearly activities is Fit For Life which again ran on Tuesday nights during May. It consists of various types of exercise or walks around the village followed by a short epilogue from a guest speaker. There was a varied group of approximately 90 to 100 women from teenagers to senior years who attended each night some from our own congregation or other churches and many with no Church connection.

During the summer months we ran two events for the young people of the area, a holiday Bible club for those of primary school age and "Reconnect" an evening club for those of high school age, both were well attended. Also during the summer months Sunday Night Lights met in various people's homes giving an opportunity for young adults to gather together after the evening church service for food and fellowship.

On Sunday July 2nd we held another church picnic after the morning service, this was held at the manse and was enjoyed by a number of the congregation.

Again this year we had a collection of gift boxes for the Samaritans Purse Shoe Box Appeal in November. These were delivered to their collection centre for distribution by that organisation to needy children in various parts of the world for Christmas.

A new venture for us this year was Warm Welcome, this ran in our fellowship room in the main hall on a Monday morning providing a warm space with refreshment for those who wished to attend. This was started in response to the need to provide a place where any member of the local community could come during the cost-of-living crisis. It has been well used and has benefited many throughout the year.

The congregation supports the United Appeal for Mission which is a central fund of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. This fund enables congregations to support the wider mission of the denomination and to do mission and outreach on denominational basis beyond what the congregation could do on its own. The United Appeal Fund provides financial support for mission personnel at home and overseas, assists congregations with the deployment of locally based staff, enables church planting, provides grant support for the upkeep of church premises, assist with the running costs of Union Theological College, the Church's training college for ministry students, and financially supports congregation in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care.

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our minister and / or one of the elders. This provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structures of the church.

General Assembly

The minister and one of our elders were nominated to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, in June but this was cancelled due to Covid regulations.

Property

During the year no major project was undertaken.

Organisations

Sunday is the busiest day of the week for the church with both Junior and Senior Sunday schools running in the morning before our main worship service.

Junior Sunday school caters for children of nursery and Primary School age and runs from September until June. The Senior Sunday School has four different classes divided into Year 8, Year 9, Year 10 and Years 11 and 12 combined. Our evening service is held later in the day with Youth Fellowship held after the service for young people of High School age.

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Achievements and performance *(continued)*

During the week various activities and organisation run from September to June catering for all age groups and everyone from the local community is very welcome. These include;

Girls Brigade which meets every Monday with Tinies and Explorers (preschool to P4), juniors (P5 - P7), Seniors (Yr8- Yr10) and Brigadiers (Yr11 upwards).

Boys Brigade which meets every week on different nights with Anchor boys (P1 to P4), Junior Section (P5 to P7) and Company Section (age 11 to 18).

The Bowling club which meets on a Tuesday night with a wide range of ages attending providing an informal evening of fellowship and fun with some competition along the way.

Our Tuesday fellowship which was held every first and third Tuesday of the month. This organises activities for senior citizens providing an opportunity to meet other people and go on trips.

Similarly, The Contact Group called Toys and Tots was held on a Wednesday morning providing a cross community link between the church and the local community for mothers/carers and their toddlers.

Wednesday night sees our midweek fellowship meet at night to study more of God's word and pray for the local community and further afield.

Once a month we run a meeting dedicated to men or women, Men's Night on a Wednesday with an age profile of around 30 to 80 plus. The women have PW (Presbyterian Women) on the second Thursday of the month with guest speakers providing a warm and inviting place where the aims of the church can be nurtured and encouraged.

Each Monday morning between 10:30 and 12:30 we hold Warm Welcome in our Fellowship room in the main hall. This provides a warm space for anyone from the local community to meet for refreshment and a listening ear.

Volunteers

The Trustees wish to acknowledge their deep appreciation of those who give freely of their time by serving on committees and helping with organisations and other church activities.

Public Benefit Statement

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland meets the public benefit requirement by providing benefit to its members and the general public by making known the Christian Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ through the advancement of religion.

The direct benefits which flow from the purposes of the Church include the gaining of an understanding in Christian beliefs as set out in the Bible and in the Church's subordinate standards (the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Shorter and Larger Catechisms) leading to spiritual and moral development and opportunities for response to Bible teaching. In turn, this framework leads to practical expressions of Christian beliefs and standards in the local community such as through the care of those in need (including the sick, disabled and bereaved).

Generally the above benefits are delivered locally by congregations and their members, or are facilitated through presbyteries or are organised and delivered centrally. Local delivery is facilitated by central resources in almost all cases. Public access is made known through the use of noticeboards, printed material, press advertisement, websites, and social media or in other ways.

The benefits are demonstrated through regular evaluation of the services and informal and ad-hoc feedback from members, their families, and members of the public.

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The purpose does not lead to harm. The only private benefit flowing from our purpose is related to Ministers, Missionaries, Deaconesses, Irish Mission workers and Lay Agents who receive benefits as a result of their holding office or employment. However, this is incidental and necessary in order to further our charitable purpose. There are no other private benefits. The beneficiaries of this purpose are members, their families, other individuals that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is in direct and indirect contact with, the community in which pastoral services are provided and other communities throughout Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and worldwide which benefit from our engagement with and support for both Christian and other secular organisations, charities and individual members of the public.

The Kirk Session has had regard to the Charity Commissions public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

Financial review

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 240 (2022 - 238) contributors during the year.

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £245,199 (2022 - £214,144).

The expenditure for the year was £254,709 (2022 - £207,925).

The reserves of the Charity at 31 December 2023 totalled £1,017,824 (2022 - £1,025,969).

Responsibilities in respect of the financial statements

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the congregations and the financial activities for that year. In preparing the financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Funds will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the funds transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the congregations and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities (1 January 2015)".

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the congregation and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Going Concern

The activities of the congregation are dependent on ongoing contributions from its members. The Trustees are of the opinion that the congregation has sufficient resources at the date of approval of these financial statements to meet commitments which will arise in the year from the date of signing this report and subject to the continuing support from members to fund on an ongoing basis the congregation's current activities and other financial commitments.

Reserves policy

The Trustees have considered the level of unrestricted reserves that it is appropriate to hold taking account of current and ongoing commitments. It is the policy of the Trustees to hold at least 3 month's normal expenditure. At the year-end unrestricted reserves were £62,289 (2022 - £66,518) which represents a slightly higher level of

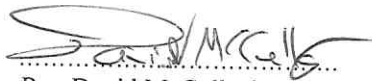
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reserves. The Trustees however, consider it prudent to hold reserves at this level as the funding of its present activities is dependent of the ongoing financial support of members.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 16 April 2024 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



Rev David McCullagh
Trustee



Keith Hanna
Trustee



William McConnell
Trustee